

The EAGLE

For the employees of the Coatesville VA Medical Center ~ March 2009

A Message From the Director



Dear Employees:

Recently, Coatesville VAMC started several Systems Redesign (SR) initiatives, as part of VHA's overall effort to increase the use of these principles and methods. Systems Redesign is a process by which we analyze and change the way we do things to improve efficiency and satisfaction. Systems Redesign examines the parts of a system to understand how the parts work as a whole. By understanding the parts, we can improve our systems to be more efficient and reduce the time it takes to complete involved tasks. Currently, CVAMC has five SR teams conducting nationally approved SR projects that focus on improving; new patients' enrollment experiences, communications to our suicide prevention coordinators, the SATU admission process, our hiring processes, and patients keeping their eye clinic appointments.

Earlier this month, Don Means, Dr. Tischler, Rosemary Wharton and I each had the pleasure of participating in the enrollment process with new patients. We found this experience to be very informative and have worked with the SR team to make and plan for some process, space and equipment improvements. While meeting with each new patient, we were pleased to learn that our current process works well and that each Veteran was very satisfied with his experience with our employees.

In addition to the five SR initiatives noted above, we have several other local SR projects in progress. If you are interested in participating in or leading an SR project, I encourage you to contact Joseph Galazin, our systems redesign coordinator, at ext. 3658 or Joseph.Galazin@va.gov.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Devansky
Director

Goodbye and Good Luck, Don!



Don Means began his career 38 years ago as a housekeeping aid and through hard work and education, eventually became the associate director. Don has provided exemplary leadership that will continue to positively impact the medical center for many years. He is both a mentor and friend to many people. Below are thoughts of several people with whom Don has worked closely.

I would like to thank Don for all of his support and mentoring throughout my career. Don has the unique ability of being a boss and friend while commanding your respect. Don should be very proud of his service to our Veterans. He will be greatly missed!

~ Tony Wolfgang

Don is a very considerate, caring, and dedicated person. I'm always impressed by the way he supports those who work around him, his focus on effective communication, and his commitment to making sure that every decision that is made yields the best outcome for the Veterans we serve.

~ Dawn Martz Porter

What I admire the most about Don is his ability to get along with people of all types. He is always so pleasant and friendly. He is a great leader and boss and I will miss him so much!!

~ Celia Dean

Welcome, Eileen Carmody!

Eileen Carmody joined us as suicide prevention coordinator late in December of 2008. She has been a social worker since 1996. She is originally from Maryland and worked in HIV and Substance Abuse programs at the University of Maryland Medical System for five years. She moved to New Jersey in 2001 and worked at several private behavioral health hospitals there, most recently as manager of adult partial programs at Underwood Memorial Hospital.



Eileen is excited to use her skills in a different setting; she sees the unique position as an opportunity to continue learning and developing, professionally. The position of suicide prevention coordinator is relatively new to VA and is continuing to evolve. Much involves case management of Veterans at high risk for suicide as well as intensive community outreach. Eileen thinks a significant challenge is that it can be hard to know if you've made a positive impact. One of the substantial benefits is that by having two social workers dedicated to suicide prevention, you have an extra focus on those who are contemplating it and that much more of an opportunity to intervene.

Eileen has a husband, Matt, and daughter, Grace, who is five years old. When she is free, she enjoys spending time with them and friends. She also likes to dance. Welcome, Eileen! We are happy to have you here!

CVAMC Visits WHYY Radio



On Wednesday, February 11th, Dr. Katari Brown, a psychologist and the military sexual trauma coordinator here, and Marsha Four, director of the Walker House, located on our campus, traveled to WHYY News Radio in Philadelphia for a live interview.

The discussion centered on issues that women Veterans face. Among these were military sexual trauma, post traumatic stress disorder, and the challenges of reintegrating into civilian life. The conversation was both very informative and entertaining. Thanks and congratulations to Dr. Brown and Ms. Four!

Rewarding Excellence at the EEO Award Ceremony

On February 17th, EEO held their annual awards program that recognizes employees who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to equal employment opportunity at the medical center.

For 2008, Judi Graziano is EEO Manager of the Year and Tony Wolfgang is EEO Supervisor of the Year. Erika Warnick and Albert Diggs received the Persons with Disabilities Awards. Virginia Washington received the Alternative Dispute Resolution Award. The Federal Women's Program, Hispanic Employment Program and Persons with Disabilities Committees all received Special Contributions Awards.

Inspirational Journeys

A few CVAMC employees have taken to the road. Lisa Mearkle, G&EC, accompanied her church to New Orleans, LA twice and also to Galveston, TX to help rebuild in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina – it is amazing to think that almost four years later, there is still so much to be done. Vera Clift, Primary Care, journeyed with The Tower of Hope, a non profit organization, to Uganda to help relieve hopeless conditions in the wake of war and genocide. The focus of her trip was to provide medical care to villagers, though the organization does much more. Beth Kennel, Respiratory Therapy, recently traveled to the Dominican Republic to do missionary work.

Health Administration Service Continues to Improve Service

HAS recently enhanced Audiocare, our automated patient communication system. The enhancements ensure Veterans receive automated appointment reminder phone calls, can call in and confirm, cancel or reschedule appointments, and can refill prescriptions. While on the phone, they'll periodically be prompted to update their contact information.

Also, on Thursday, March 5th, HAS spear-headed a systems redesign exercise that was part of a national initiative to significantly improve the process impacting new Veterans seeking care in the VA Healthcare System. As part of this, Mr. Devansky, Mr. Means, Dr. Tischler, and Ms. Wharton each had the opportunity to meet with Veterans who had just gone through the enrollment process. Overall, the feedback was great and some good insights were made on how to improve our process even more!



159,973,959 steps...wow!

At the end of Week 10 of Step into 2009!, CVAMC participants have collectively taken 159,973,959 steps! All of the people who signed up and stuck with it should not only be proud of their accomplishment and dedication, but also looking great! We are currently in first place in this VISN 4 Competition!

Saving Fuel

Gas prices have been pretty unpredictable lately, and while we've all been happy to see them low, relatively speaking, it is still important to conserve energy. It is quite likely that prices will continue to rise over the years.

This happens because of increased demand for energy, world-wide. The more we use, the higher the price. The more we pay, the more money goes to oil-rich countries. We can decrease this demand by using less. We can use trains or buses or ride a bicycle when these options are practical. Driving a smaller vehicle gives us more miles per gallon and causes less pollution. We can plan our trips to take care of several errands in one outing and walk if the store is close enough to us.

We need to look at conserving energy as a patriotic duty. It is not only good for our environment, but it also keeps more money in our economy, keeping America strong and secure.

~ George L. Squire, HBPC Provider

National Dietitians and Dietetic Technician Day

On March 11th, the nation recognized these professionals who hold degrees in nutrition, dietetics, public health or a related field. They are food and nutrition experts who use this expertise to help individuals make unique, positive lifestyle changes by translating the science of nutrition into practical solutions for healthy living.

At CVAMC, we are fortunate to have 10 dedicated dietitians and dietetic technicians working hard for Veterans. On this day, and through the entire month of March, we salute this team which includes (front row, left to right) Marcia Gurule, Carolyn Grzenda, Sandy Stokes (back row, left to right) Laura Sarmento, Marge Hajek, Elaine Palla, Meredith Kenny, Cheryl Kerr, Sheree Klopp and Peter Wetterlin.



Congratulations, Chaplain Evans!



Chaplain Lawrence Evans took over as our chaplaincy program manager in November, 2008. Previously, he was a chaplain on our Substance Abuse Treatment Unit. Chaplain Evans is a Vietnam Veteran with 22 ½ years of service. He was active in the 198th Light Infantry Brigade. He eventually left the service for a time to pursue a master's degree in pastoral psychology at Duke University and a doctorate in pastoral counseling at Wesley Theological

Seminary, completing his residency at Duke Medical Center. Next, he resumed his Army service as a chaplain there for the following 10 years. He went on to teach at the University of Southern Mississippi and then became a full time professor and dean at Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, PA.

Chaplain Evans, who is a certified psycho-therapist, believes that every person has a sacred story that is unique to him or her. He approaches treatment by entering his visitor's world. An interesting thing about him is that he listens to jazz as he writes his sermons and he writes poetry for himself.

Good News

Six well-deserved Coins of Excellence were awarded by Network Director Michael Moreland on March 19th. Rosalind Phillips, Eileen Carmody, Mary Pearce, David Chenger, Eric Merchore and Elton Artis acted quickly and critically to save the life of a Veteran who was close to suicide. Previously, Mr. Devansky presented Sue Race with a Coin of Excellence at the February 18th Director's Town Hall Meeting. Sue's quick thinking in getting an ill conference attendee help and her kindness as the attendee recovered in a strange place are applauded.

Congratulations to Richard Sama and Medical Media for being presented the first Recycling Award from CVAMC's Recycling Committee. In an effort to reduce waste, Medical Media continuously creates scratch pads from excess paper.

Congratulations to Jennifer Koehler who was sworn in March 11th as president of the Pennsylvania Recreation Therapy Society. Jenn is a great advocate for the value of recreation therapy; the society will benefit by her appointment.

Congratulations to Lynne Debiak whose Medical Media Development Network logo design placed 1st runner up in a national competition. Her artwork will appear in an upcoming issue of Vanguard, VA's national newsletter.

Congratulations to Dellinah Deveaux, bed control program manager, Donald Funk, business manager, GEC, and Laurie Shannon-Bailey, recreation therapist, who successfully completed the VISN 4 Leadership Development Institute (LDI) program. Graduation was held on November 21st, 2008 at the Soldiers and Sailors Home in Pittsburgh, with members of VISN 4 leadership in attendance. Kudos for your commitment to leadership development!

On Tuesday, March 17th, Ed Gouge, assistant fire chief, Tim Soley and Bob Dyer, firefighters, visited Career Day at Coatesville Area High School 9-10 Center. They spoke to students about the challenges and rewards of being a career firefighter. They also shared tips on how to navigate through the career as a volunteer firefighter and work toward getting a paid position one day.

Culture Change

**It's a bird! It's a plane!
Nope...it's definitely a bird!**

Recently our Building 138 CLC welcomed some peppy new residents of the bird variety. These seven finches reside in a brand new oak aviary located in the main lobby. Aviaries differ from cages in that they are big enough that birds are free to fly around. Finches are passerine birds, often seed-eating, found mainly in the northern hemisphere and Africa. They are generally small with strong, stubby beaks.

They landed at CVAMC to entertain Veterans, visitors and employees. This project is part of the ongoing CLC Culture Change initiative. The phone booth and extra furniture were removed to create plenty of space for onlookers. Soon the lobby will be painted to enhance the new welcoming and relaxed environment. This effort was collaborative, taking place across many services. The result is a wonderful attraction that everyone can enjoy. Please stop by to see our new friends – they really are something to chirp about!



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LEAD and LDI 2009 Candidates Announced

Education and Staff Development is happy to announce that Deborah Elmer, Patricia Norwood, Kim Pouncy and Bernice Ridgel will be CVAMC's VISN 4 Facility Level LEAD (Leadership Effectiveness Accountability Development) Program participants. The purpose of the six month, intensive training initiative is to develop candidates' leadership talent and core competency skills. Candidates were chosen based on their "high potential" characteristics including model organizational values, commitment to skill and career development, and positive communication practices.

Additionally, Mike Carcanague will be participating in LDI or Leadership Development Institute. This similar program lasts for one year and is targeted to key leadership personnel in VISN 4. Tony Wolfgang and Franklin Birch will be participating in VISN 4's Network Executive Health Care Leadership Institute. This is a cutting-edge executive development program that has been specifically designed to stretch and challenge participants as leaders.

Congratulations and good luck to all!

Calendar of Events

National Nutrition Month®

March is National Nutrition Month. This year's theme is "eat right." In recognition, CVAMC's dieticians have organized a food drive to support area food cupboards. You can donate non-perishable items at various locations throughout the medical center through March 27th.

Women's History Month

In March, we celebrate women's significant impact in history and we follow the women currently making a difference. This year's theme is "Women Taking the Lead to Save our Planet." Mr. Devansky encourages all employees, with supervisor's permission, to attend the Women's History Month observance featuring Margaret A. Orner, storyteller. Join us March 25th at 1pm in the Great Hall.

National Professional Social Work Month

Each year, in March, the National Association of Social Workers honors social workers across the country with National Professional Social Work Month. This important observance is an annual opportunity for the profession to reflect on its history, celebrate the important work that is being done and look toward a promising future for all those social workers serve. Be sure to tell your favorite social worker, "great job!"

April is National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Month

Currently, the need for organs and tissues for transplant far exceeds the availability, and that gap is growing. In the United States, 17 patients die waiting every day. For our region's information, visit: <http://donors1.org>.

National Former POW Recognition Program and Luncheon

The Nation observes National Former POW Recognition Day on April 9th each year. At CVAMC, we will honor former POWs with a special program and luncheon. The celebration will take place April 17th, beginning at noon in the All Faith Chapel. We are delighted to have retired United States Army Lieutenant General J.W. Becton as our featured guest.

Volunteer Recognition Luncheon

On Sunday, April 19th, Voluntary Service will hold the Annual Volunteer Awards Luncheon. The event begins at 1pm at Downingtown Country Club. Employees are invited to join in recognizing our volunteers for all of their hard and worthwhile work. Please contact Voluntary Service at extensions 4228 or 4801 for tickets. The cost for non-volunteers is \$27.50 per person.

Substance Abuse Treatment Unit Open House

On April 17th, SATU will hold an open house. Community providers have been invited to tour the unit and learn about our program. The hope is to create awareness about our program and generate more referrals from these providers. We believe that by working together, we can reach far more Veterans, who otherwise would have nowhere to turn. The open house will run from 1pm to 4pm in Building 38, Room 224. Contact Molly Goldsmith at extension 5402 with questions.

Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

CVAMC will participate in this nationwide event on April 23rd, 2009. Up to 50 employees will be able to bring their son, daughter, or other child to work this day. This program is designed to expose girls and boys to what a parent or mentor in their lives does during the work day. It stresses showing them the value of education, helping them discover the power and possibilities in a balanced work and family life. Details and application instructions are forthcoming. Please contact Kathi Rendall at extension 6113 with questions.

VA Research Week

Research Week is May 3rd - 9th. This week celebrates the achievements of VA researchers in providing high quality care for Veterans and advancing medical science. It also serves to educate Veterans, the public, and the media about the research being conducted at medical centers, and its impact on treating and preventing disease and disability. Be sure to stop by the Great Hall on May 6th or May 7th to see the "brain" display — it will be part of the annual Quality Improvement Fair.

Quality Improvement Fair

The annual QI Fair will take place on May 6th and May 7th. Contact Linda Witham by April 10th to apply for a space to showcase your service's QI accomplishments. Also, all attendees will earn 1 hour QI training and will be eligible for door prizes. Refreshments will be served.

Nurses Week

National Nurses Week is celebrated from May 6th through May 12th. CVAMC's observance will take place from May 11th through 13th. Many informative and fun activities are being planned. For Questions, please contact Marsha Musser at extension 5123.

Third Annual Welcome Event

Mark your calendars! We've set the date for August 15th, 2009. The committee will meet this week to begin planning. Be on the look-out for more information!

The Eagle is published quarterly for the employees of the Coatesville VA Medical Center.

Please address suggestions, comments, or story ideas to:

Kathleen Pomorski X4203 or kathleen.pomorski@va.gov.

The editor reserves the right to make changes and/or edits to any submission chosen for publication.

Layout/design/photography completed by CVAMC Medical Media Department.

Employee of the Month

December: Joe Martin
January: Dennis Brown
February: William Vaughn

Supervisor of the Month

December: James Goss
January: Tony Wolfgang
February: Betty Newhart



Our entire medical center family mourns the loss of Ms. Tempie L. Armstrong. She passed away January 27, 2009. Tempie was the administrative support assistant for the Office of Community & Congressional Affairs. She was a dedicated VA employee with 25 years of service. Tempie prided herself in serving our Nation's Veterans and always had kind words and a smile for everyone. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Armstrong family.

SERVICE AWARDS

Congratulations to the following employees who have been recognized for 20 or more years of service between October and December.

20 years:

Susan Brown
Amanda Gaull
Sharon Hottel
Micheline Madonna
John Milligan
Carol Mulhern
Carmela Previte
Laverne Wallace

25 years:

Beverly Bookman-Parker
Kathryn Green
Kevin Hicklen
Roxanne Holmes
Rose James
Debra Metzler
Dawn Sitkowski

30 years:

Philip Goodman
Alfred Humphrey
Dennis Panik
Donald Zwick, Jr.

35 years:

Arthur Burgess, Jr.
Monica Chapman
John Phenneger
Nina Yentzer

Good Bye & Good Luck to our Retirees

Employee Name:	Years of Service:
Mayola Paylor	42
Robert Marshall	38
Sharon McCreary	38
Donald Means	38
Evelyn Johnson	37
Nancy Elliott-Carter	35
James Simmons	33
Theresa Springs	33
Charles Brown	32
Georgianna Miller	31
Nancy Mattson	24
Paula Homer	22
Irene Norris	18
Rea Oliver	9